

Delaware Receives First Ever State-Level Health Champion Award From American Diabetes Association

NEW CASTLE – The Department of Health and Social Services' Division of Public Health (DPH) has been awarded a Health Champion Designation by the American Diabetes Association for instilling wellness in its worksite culture. Delaware is the first state-level office in the country to win the inaugural award. The Health Champion Designation recognizes companies and organizations that inspire and encourage organizational well-being and is part of the Association's [Wellness Lives HereSM](#) initiative. Successful applicants met healthy living criteria in three categories: nutrition and weight management, organizational well-being, and encouraging physical activity.

"We are honored to be recognized as a Health Champion," said Dr. Karyl Rattay, DPH Director. "Employee wellness initiatives encourage healthy lifestyles to prevent diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and several cancers. It is important for the Division of Public Health to model the practices and healthy lifestyles that we promote to the public."

"This is truly exciting news, and an honor for the state's public health agency to receive this designation," said Rita Landgraf, Secretary for the Department of Health and Social Services. "We appreciate the Association's recognition of our efforts to improve not only health on a statewide level, but within our own agency."

"It is with great pride that we acknowledge the focus towards employee wellness that the Delaware Division of Public Health exemplifies," said Jennifer Fassbender, Director of Wellness

and Community Partnerships for the Association. “Providing a culture of wellness for employees is not only the ‘right thing to do’, but benefits the employer with a more engaged and productive workforce. The American Diabetes Association applauds the efforts of Delaware.”

Examples of DPH policies and activities that qualified it for the Healthy Champion Designation include:

- Producing a guide, titled [Healthier Food and Snacks for Meetings, Seminars, and Catered Events](#).
- Allowing employees to wear ‘active wear’ clothing when staff have no scheduled meetings with vendors or outside meetings in exchange for at least 30 minutes of physical activity during the workday (ie: walking during lunch break)
- Placing posters throughout building to encourage healthy activities such as taking the stairs/providing additional health information including ADA brochures and resources
- Encouraging/permitting employees to stand at their desks and use stationary foot pedals/standing desk/active desks, etc.
- Forming walking clubs
- Adopting a smoke-free workplace policy (state policy)
- Integrating health and wellness information into employee communications such as the internal newsletter

An estimated 70,000 adult Delawareans have diabetes. The prevalence of Delaware adults diagnosed with diabetes more than doubled from 4.9 percent in 1991 to 11.1 percent in 2013, and the state rate mirrors the national trend. Severely overweight and obese individuals risk developing pre-diabetes or diabetes, especially if they have a family history of the disease.

For more information about healthy lifestyles, visit healthydelaware.org.

Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware’s citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and

protecting vulnerable populations. The Division of Public Health (DPH), a division within DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, drink almost no sugary beverages.

About the American Diabetes Association

The American Diabetes Association is leading the fight to stop diabetes and its deadly consequences and fighting for those affected by diabetes. The Association funds research to prevent, cure and manage diabetes; delivers services to hundreds of communities; provides objective and credible information; and gives voice to those denied their rights because of diabetes. For the past 75 years, its mission has been to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes. To learn more about the organization and Wellness Lives Here, go to www.diabetes.org/wellnessliveshere.